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ABSTRACT

Since 1983, Michigan has addressed youth unemployment through the Michigan Youth Corps (MYC), a state-supported summer jobs program. Administered by the Michigan Department of Labor and funded by general appropriation of the Michigan legislature, MYC is the nation's largest state-funded youth employment program. The service delivery area (SDA) agencies established under the Job Training Partnership Act assume major responsibility for the delivery of services. They coordinate referrals, work site development, monitoring and evaluation, data collection, and placement. SDAs also help MYC participants identify job or career interests and access the skills, education, and training needed to compete for jobs and focus on the future. All MYC jobs are sponsored by city or county government, educational institutions, or nonprofit organizations. In 1987, MYC added three innovations to the education component: placement assistance in securing private sector jobs interviews, mandatory workshops providing career awareness and exploration activities and job seeking skills, and special services for dropouts. An evaluation indicated program strengths are its simple eligibility requirements and application process and provision of work experiences that give long-term value to the state. Although the program is transferable, continued state commitment to funding is a possible problem. (YLB)

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MICHIGAN YOUTH CORPS – MORE THAN A SUMMER JOB

by Dianne C. Powell

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MYC crew cleans beach area at Warren Dunes State Park on Lake Michigan

In Brief

Since 1983, the state of Michigan has addressed youth unemployment through the Michigan Youth Corps, a state supported summer jobs program. By the end of 1988, the program will have provided work experience and training for over 100,000 unemployed 18- through 21-year-olds. Administered by the Michigan Department of Labor and funded by general appropriation of the Michigan Legislature, Michigan Youth Corps is the nation's largest state-funded youth employment program.

Introduction

In 1983, the state of Michigan was in the throes of the "worst economic times since the Great Depression of the 30s." General unemployment in the state was 14.2 percent with some areas experiencing even higher levels. Flint, one of the most industrialized cities in the state, had the highest unemployment rate (21.5 percent) in the nation.

Particularly hard hit were the young people. More than 160,000 18- through 21-year-olds were unemployed. Newly elected Gov. James J. Blanchard warned that Michigan was facing the unacceptable risk of losing an entire generation to joblessness, "of having an entire generation which never feels the satisfaction of holding a job, which never feels the satisfaction of economic self-sufficiency, which never learns the importance of good work habits or knows the value of putting its skills to good use." In a move to cut Michigan's 29 percent unemployment rate for 18- through 21-year-olds, Blanchard proposed and the Legislature approved implementation of the Michigan Youth Corps (MYC). The legislation which created the MYC is Act No. 69 of the Public Acts of 1983.

In the first year of the Michigan Youth Corps program, almost 68,000 young people signed up for jobs. With an appropriation of $39.4 million, MYC provided job placement for 28,349 applicants, making it instantly the largest summer youth employment program in the nation.

In 1984, 16,453 youth participated in the program at a cost of $17.4 million. Figures for 1985 and 1986 show declines in the program to 14,690 and 13,700 participants and appropriations of $15.9 million and $15 million. (See Table 1)

In 1987, following his landslide re-election, Blanchard pledged that eligible unemployed Michigan youth aged 18 through 21 who wanted a summer job would have one.

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Table 1
Michigan Youth Corps (MYC) History

Year	Budget	Participants
1983	$39.4 million	28,349
1984	17.4 million	16,453
1985	15.9 million	14,690
1986	15.0 million	13,700
1987	30.0 million	22,344
1988	20.0 million	*15,000

Year	Unemployed 18-21-yr. olds**	Youth Unemployment Rate (18-21)**
1983	160,200	24.5%
1984	98,600	21.2%
1985	85,100	18.4%
1986	74,200	17.0%
1987	67,900	15.3%

*Projected number

**SOURCE: *Michigan Employment Security Commission*

The youth unemployment level in Michigan at the time was 15.3 percent. The Legislature appropriated $30 million for MYC's 1987 program, $15 million in its original appropriation plus a $15 million supplemental appropriation. More than 30,000 young people applied and received job offers. Of this number, 22,344 participated in the program. Some of the youth declining MYC participation found better paying jobs, some chose other activities, some went to school, some could not get to the jobs offered because of lack of transportation, and some chose not to participate for personal reasons.

MYC is not in competition with the Michigan business community for workers. MYC participants are encouraged to seek employment in the private sector and to view the Corps as an employer of "last resort."

Legislative Background

Behind the MYC legislation are a combination of problems and an approach to their solution. The problems are the massive numbers of young people who are primarily unemployed during the summer months and the struggle to address state and local service needs. Loosely based on the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s, the legislatively-mandated goals of MYC are:

- Give young people a job;
- Give them work that is meaningful and necessary;
- Help them move to new opportunities.

The purpose of MYC is to provide a summer youth employment and work training program that maintains and enhances Michigan's human and natural resources while providing young people with experiences that increase their chances of obtaining private sector employment.

To be eligible for the Michigan Youth Corps an applicant must be unemployed, 18 through 21 years old, and a Michigan resident. To ensure that needy young people benefit from the Youth Corps program, first hiring preference is given to persons living in households headed by an unemployed person. Second hiring preference goes to the oldest applicants. In addition, MYC seeks to hire minorities, youth from households headed by a single person, handicapped youth, and equal numbers of males and females.

MYC applicants must be unemployed and cannot be the son or daughter of an elected or appointed government or school official. Participation also is prohibited for sons and daughters of employees in programs established by lead agencies or their subcontractors. Persons on the payroll of a lead agency or its subcontractors within 30 days of applying to the MYC are also ineligible.

In funding the program, the legislature specifies that at least 82 percent of the money goes to wage related program expenses. Not more than 18 percent of the grant can be used for non-wage related program expenses and administration.

Implementation and Administration

In its first year, MYC administration was handled through the Department of Management and Budget. From 1984 to 1987, administration was handled through five state departments: Agriculture, Education, Labor, Natural Resources and Transportation. In 1987, in a move to decentralize the program and better address local needs, substantial administration of the MYC was turned over to Michigan's 26 Service Delivery Area (SDA) agencies.

"The decision (to turn the local management of MYC over to the SDAs) was made by the Department of Labor to provide more local responsiveness to the program," said MYC Deputy Director Kathy Madden. "People who live in an area know what the problems and needs of the community are. Community-based SDA agencies are acknowledged as employment and training experts in the state and have a network to provide consistent services for MYC participants. They offer a direct link to private sector employment."

SDAs, located throughout the state, also administer the federal Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) program to help economically disadvantaged youth and adults prepare for and obtain employment.

Michael Dennis, deputy director of Lansing Tri-County Employment and Training Administration, has worked with youth employment since 1974. As an SDA agency, his office is an umbrella organization for employment programs and a principal contracting agency for the Michigan Youth Corps in the Service Delivery Area.

"We've been involved with Michigan Youth Corps since it began," said Dennis. "We've always had the Department of Labor money, and after the first year we became the agency responsible for the Department of Education portion of the program as well. We're strictly administrators. We subcontract with six different organizations, four that are related to education directly, three intermediate school districts which are basically countywide and one central city school district, and we do monitoring and data collection."

As "Lead Agencies" for the MYC, the SDAs assume major responsibility for the delivery of services. They coordinate referrals, work site development, monitoring and evaluation, data collection and placement. SDAs also help MYC participants to identify job or career interests. They help participants access the skills, education and training needed to compete for jobs and focus on the future.

The MYC program officially opens on June 1 each year. Applications are available on April 1 at all SDA agencies, Michigan Employment Security Commission Job Placement offices, Department of Social Services offices, colleges and universities, community and junior colleges, school districts, town halls, area skills centers and community action agencies. All eligible Department of Social Services clients receive MYC applications in the mail.

The MYC application form is short and simple. Applicants must show proof of age and Michigan residency and sign a statement indicating that they are unemployed at the time of hire. There are no income eligibility requirements.

All MYC jobs are sponsored by city or county government, educational institutions, or non-profit organizations. The jobs are full-time, pay $3.35 per hour, and last an average of 10 weeks. Some jobs begin as early as May, while others open up through the spring and summer. Job sites include soil conservation districts, county fairgrounds, Department of Natural Resources facilities, state and local public areas, schools, day care centers, hospitals, parks, recreation areas, and governmental, educational or non-profit organization offices.

In the first five years of the program, Youth Corps members contributed 26,310,000 hours of service, or an average of more than 5.2 million hours each summer. The range of jobs performed by MYC members fall into four categories: construction, parks and recreation, office and human services.

Jobs performed include conservation and beautification projects, work with the handicapped, child care, tutoring, maintenance and clerical. Corps members worked in hospitals as pharmaceutical aides, assistant physical therapists, and housekeeping and activity aides. They painted houses for the elderly, built a gazebo at a senior citizens home, built wheelchair ramps for handicapped citizens and served as tour guides. Seventy-one Youth Corps workers volunteered to search and clean up the site of the Aug. 16, 1987, Northwest Airlines Flight 255 crash in Detroit. They have also worked in libraries and bookmobiles and served as day camp leaders. A report written by the MYC staff on the 1987 program lists 190 activities requiring 78 skills.

"We've seen an evolution of the MYC program from the early days when funding was divided between the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Natural Resources and Transportation," said Dennis. "At that point it was just getting kids out there and getting them a job for the summer. Now the program is funneled through the SDA/JTPA system and the intent is to make them more employable, not just to get them a summer job."

Part of the program to make young people more employable is the education component under the guidance of Carol Wolenberg, MYC education director. Similar to other aspects of the program, the education component, begun in 1985, continues to evolve. "We look at the total program each year to make the necessary changes, to adapt to current situations," says Betty Howe, director of the Michigan Department of Labor and MYC.

MYC added three innovations to the education component in 1987:

- Placement Assistance offers MYC participants help in securing private sector job interviews. SDAs provide this service at the beginning of the program.
- Mandatory Employability Skills Training workshops provide career awareness and exploration activities, and help MYC participants develop proper job seeking skills. They learn to fill out applications, write resumes and identify job opportunities.
- Special services for participants who have dropped out of high school include assessment of skills and abilities, career counseling and referral to appropriate programs. Remedial or literacy training also is offered.

"The increased emphasis on career planning and education is vital in this program," said Wolenberg. "While they are working in the Corps, we feel a responsibility to help MYCers identify goals for themselves and learn how to reach those goals."

As part of the efforts to link MYC participants with future employment opportunities, MYC Employer Honor Roll members guarantee job interviews to qualified Youth Corps graduates. The Honor Roll, co-sponsored by the Michigan State Chamber of Commerce, consists of businesses that agree to guarantee job interviews to qualified MYC graduates. In 1987, the 26 Honor Roll businesses included restaurants, retailers, manufacturers, child care providers, banks, bakeries, technologies, landscapers and nursing home care providers. To be considered for the Honor Roll, employers must be Michigan-based, a statewide employer or a large single-location employer, and have entry-level positions available. Employers such as K-Mart, Hudson's, McDonalds Corp., Sears Roebuck & Co., and the Upjohn Co. are members of MYC's Honor Roll.

"Corps members are given the opportunity to get in the door' of these businesses and show off skills they gained through their Youth Corps work experience," Deputy Director Madden said.

In addition to the 26 businesses on the 1987 MYC Employer Honor Roll, six statewide associations encouraged their memberships to join the Honor Roll. Two major newspapers —*The Detroit Free Press* and *The Detroit News*—became program boosters.

Honor Roll members are solicited by the governor-appointed MYC Opportunities Group. The Opportunities Group is an advisory board made up of 15 representatives from business, education and labor. The goals of the Opportunities Group are to help design and implement MYC's career guidance services and to increase awareness among employers that MYC graduates comprise a large and viable labor pool. The aim of the Opportunities Group is to help transition young people to new jobs or educational pursuits.

According to Opportunities Group member Don G. Tonti, the board is a source of new ideas and perspectives. "The strength of the MYC comes from government and private industry working together," Tonti said.

In past years, Youth Corps members spent a couple of days in the middle of their Youth Corps jobs learning about resumes, interviews and job-hunting skills. For 1988, the job preparation portion of the program was "front-end loaded" according to Director Howe. In a move to expand its efforts to help young people learn job-search skills, the state opened its employability skills training to every young person 18 through 21 who wanted to take part. Youth Corps participation was not a requirement for taking advantage of the employability skills training.

"We are looking to transition people who don't need the MYC into private sector employment," said Howe. "If young people can choose between a Youth Corps job and a private sector job, that means that they are ready for a private sector job and should take it. We are keenly aware that Michigan taxpayers—and that includes businesses—fund this program."

According to Howe, offering the employability-skills training early helps the most employable young people find private sector jobs. Youth Corps jobs are then left to people who need them most.

Evaluation

One criticism faced by MYC staff and program supporters has been a lack of documentation of the effectiveness of the program. Limited follow-up took place in the first four years of the program.

In 1987, Gov. Blanchard hired Louis Harris and Associates to find out what the MYC program really delivers to participants. The central question of the study was: "Do the participants in the Michigan Youth Corps program feel that they have obtained certain benefits which will enhance them both as productive individuals and as future members of the work force?" Pollsters interviewed a cross-section of 1,000 of the 22,344 young people who joined the MYC in 1987. Corps members were interviewed at the beginning of their participation, and follow-up interviews were conducted with 718 of the original 1,000 after the program concluded.

Harris described his poll as a new mechanism for accountability in government. He viewed it as a way to establish and maintain credibility or to find out when service programs are not working. The first phase of the Harris survey measured how participants heard about MYC, where they came from and what their hopes and expectations about the program were. The follow-up phase measured how well original expectations were met, as well as attitudes about the program. Survey results were broken down by age, sex, race, education, family income, prior activity and fall plans. (See Table 2 for characteristics of 1987 MYC participants. See Table 3 for highlights of the Harris poll.)

According to Harris, "The program successfully mixes poverty young people with those from more privileged homes, those who are dropouts with those who aspire to go to graduate school, those who are middle income whites with low income blacks. This cut across income, racial and educational lines may well be one of the secrets of the program's success."

Gary Corbin, chief deputy director of the Department of Labor and a former state senator, sees the mix of young people brought together as a strong advantage. "No one gets categorized as hard to serve or low income," said Corbin. "In effect, there are many low income participants in the Youth Corps, but there is no categorization. You have those who aspire to graduate school and those who've dropped out of school serving together, and that mix probably reflects a pluralistic society much better than putting people in groups and separating them according to income or other qualifications. A sense of camaraderie develops (among Youth Corps participants), and that is one of the major keys of its success."

Table 2
Characteristics of 1987 MYC Participants

Age
18 – 31%
19 – 27%
20 – 22%
21 – 19%

Sex
53% Female
47% Male

Repeat Participation: 25%

Education
20% – less than high school degree
43% – high school graduates
35% – some college

Race
54% – White
44% – Black
2% – Hispanic

Family Income
27% – $ 7,500 or less
15% – $ 7,501 - $15,000
12% – $15,001 - $25,000
9% – $25,001 - $35,000
16% – $35,001 or more

SOURCE: *"An In Depth Before and After Study of a Cross-Section of Youth Attending the Michigan Youth Corps Program – 1988,"* Louis Harris and Associates, Inc., December, 1987.

According to the Harris report, "the diversity of the make-up of the Michigan Youth Corps must be viewed as a strength, for it obviously is operating in an environment somewhat more akin to what the outside world might be than if it simply were a program for those who only came from a poverty background.

"More than anything else, the Michigan Youth Corps took an inexperienced group of young people, almost totally lacking in previous work situations, and has given them the basic confidence they need to be able to seriously address their future as productive people," said Harris.

According to Harris, past surveys of job corps and other youth training programs have "never yielded results as positive and responsive with so many specific and basic benefits derived. Surely this is the most effective program our firm has ever observed for youth, anywhere, any time or any place. There is little doubt that the Michigan Youth Corps program could well become a prototype of what other states, the federal government and the private sector can hope to emulate."

Table 3
Harris Poll Highlights

What participants liked most:

98% – Felt the MYC was worthwhile
86% – Would join again
87% – Enhanced personal maturity
(23% – turning point in their lives)
97% – An enjoyable one
71% – Enjoyed the MYC a "great deal"

Liked least:

44% – Nothing
10% – Poor working conditions
9% – Boring or unrewarding work
5% – People they worked with
5% – Poor supervision
3% – Getting up early
2% – Work was too hard

Worksites:

34% – Public buildings (libraries, museums, etc.)
28% – School buildings, school yards
20% – Parks, forests, recreation areas
7% – Along highways, especially rest areas
6% – Hospitals, health clinics
3% – Fairgrounds
3% – Homes and apartments
1% – Soil conservation districts

Expectations met:

1. Being given responsibility (98%)
2. Learning to organize for work (96%)
3. Seeing a project through to completion (97%)
4. Getting work experience (94%)
5. Learning to work as a member of a team (97%)
6. Learning to look for a job (86%)
7. Learning specific job skills (90%)
8. Earning money (92%)
9. Doing something useful in community (95%)
10. Having a good time (94%)

Personal benefits:

1. Prepared well in dealing with others (96%)
2. Helped cope with work rules and job expectations (96%)
3. Learned how to handle a job (96%)
4. Prepared for dealing with supervisory personnel (96%)
5. Prepared for "work in general" (94%)
6. Helped prepare to compete in job market (81%)
7. Helped prepare for present employment or type of job they hoped to have (76%)
8. Prepared them for career being pursued or hoped to pursue (69%)

SOURCE: *Michigan Youth Corps Coming of Age*

Not everyone holds such a glowing opinion of the MYC. Sen. Doug Cruce of Troy, contended the Harris survey should have concentrated on employer perceptions rather than what the MYC workers think of the program. Cruce calls MYC a make-work program with little or no training involved and little or no effort to place students. Cruce referred to the program as a "cheerleading club for the governor" made up primarily of college students on summer break.

Sen. Joe Conroy of Flint, who introduced the original MYC legislation, called MYC a success. "It is not laden with bureaucracy, it produces visible results, and it's a no nonsense program based on the work ethic," said Conroy.

Rep. Robert L. Emerson from Flint, favored a year round program. He would also like to see participants working on projects that provide more training, but noted MYC was doing as well as could be expected for a short-term employment program. "Providing them [MYC participants] with basic skills, the experience of showing up each day, is good for the kids and good preparation for future employment," Emerson said.

An informal survey conducted by the Labor Department following the 1986 MYC program revealed that 78 percent of the participants either found new jobs or enrolled in education or training programs following their MYC work experience. The 1987 Harris survey produced the same percentage. To further measure the effectiveness of the program, a second follow-up phase to the Harris survey is scheduled for completion in the summer of 1988. The second follow-up will determine how the earlier polled 1987 Youth Corps participants are faring in terms of jobs, salary, further training and continued schooling.

Youth Programs in Other States

According to Youth Service America there are nearly 50 youth service and conservation corps in the United States. Some youth corps enroll only the disadvantaged and some, such as MYC, are for all young people; some are urban and some are rural; some are residential work camps and some are nonresidence work sites; some programs are state or locally run while others are privately funded.

There are 31 year-round conservation and service corps and 18 summer corps operated by states, cities and counties. Of the year-round programs, 14 are state programs. Of the

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Louis Harris, Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.

summer corps programs, only seven, including MYC, are state programs. Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Vermont have summer youth conservation corps. The total annual funding for these six programs is approximately $3 million for about 1,500 participants.

MYC is the only state summer corps funded by state appropriation without benefit of federal money. MYC legislation allows private funding of up to $200,000 a year. Private funding, when available, is an addition to the MYC budget. In 1985, under a special provision of the Legislature, Ford Division of Ford Motor Co. donated $335,000 to MYC to hire additional young people to work on special projects. In 1986, Ford Division contributed $100,000 to MYC to hire 100 young people to assist a clean-up project on the Rouge River. In 1988, Dow Chemical Company donated $50,000 to complete three special community projects and to provide additional training to MYC participants.

The Maine Conservation Corps is a seasonal program which includes a summer component. Projects run eight to 14 weeks and are administered by the Department of Conservation in cooperation with other public and private nonprofit natural resource agencies. The program annually serves 110 to 125, 14- to 21-year-old JTPA participants. Funding is a combination of state funds and local government's federal Summer Youth dollars. The 1988 budget is about $400,000. Approximately $35,000 of the state appropriation is earmarked for a volunteer and internship program called *Serve Maine*. *Serve Maine* promotes and manages volunteer and intern opportunities with public natural resource agencies.

The Maryland Conservation Corps has an annual budget of $1.4 million and serves about 750, 14- to 21-year-olds. The program is administered by the Department of Natural Resources and is funded by a $750,000 state appropriation plus JTPA money. The program includes job readiness training and environmental education. In four years, 2,800 young people have participated in the program.

The New Hampshire Conservation Corps, in its second year, has grown from 10 to 40 participants aged 15 to 18. The program is administered by the Student Conservation Association, and work is done on public lands. The 1987 budget was $25,000; the 1988 budget is $140,000. Funding sources include the New Hampshire Charitable Fund and JTPA. Legislatively approved state funding will start in 1989.

The Oregon Youth Conservation Corps started in 1987 with 35 sites and a budget of $1,120,000. The program had 409, 16- to 23-year-old participants. Funding was from the State General Fund, state agencies, JTPA, Exxon Stripper Wells Funds and private sponsorship.

The Pennsylvania Conservation Corps operates a four-day week with a fifth unpaid environmental education day. The 1987 budget was $37,000 and sixteen 15-to 18-year-olds participated in the program. Funding sources included foundation grants and private donations matched with funds from the Department of Environmental Resources. Work sites are residential camps. Participants must have a "C" average in school, provide three references and pass an interview to participate.

The Vermont Youth Conservation Corps served 63, 16- to 21-year-olds in 1987 with a budget of $170,000. Eighty percent of the budget was federal money and 20 percent was from private sources. The 1988 budget is $300,000: 60 percent from private sources and 40 percent from JTPA. Seventy-six young people in residential and non-residential sites will work eight weeks in 1988. The program offers college, high school and remedial education credits.

Michigan also has JTPA programs, as well as a year-round Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps (MCCC). The MCCC is a targeted program for 18- to 25-year-old welfare recipients. The program serves 500 with an annual budget of $5.4 million.

According to Margaret Rosenberry of the Human Environment Center in Washington, D.C., "The conservation and service corps movement has expanded dramatically in the past few years. . . . Youth corps work and they manifest a vision—that through positive and comprehensive effort young people can improve their performance in the labor market, increase productivity and make significant contributions to public resources and services. They also promote intangibles —citizenship, self-esteem, and cross-cultural communication and understanding. They inspire broad, bipartisan support in their states and localities because they address two problems at once: our unconscionable youth unemployment levels and our severe unmet needs for human services and conservation work."

Transferability

In transferring any program from one locale to another, consideration must be given to the social, political and economic environments. However, if a state has unacceptable levels of unemployed young people, has service jobs needing to be done, and has a strong bipartisan desire to address both problems, the Michigan Youth Corps program is both transferable and a good role model. To be successful the program requires broad-based bipartisan commitment and strong support from the governor. The biggest stumbling block in transferring the MYC program probably would arise from efforts to obtain state funding.

In Michigan, where funding has been generous, timing has in some years been a problem. According to MYC staff members, obtaining an MYC appropriation early is important. Money not appropriated until July is harder to use when there are fewer applicants left to place.

Specifically, any state wishing to implement a program similar to the MYC should consider the following recommendations from those who have worked on the Michigan program:

- Keep the program open to everyone in a specific age group—no income or education restrictions;
- Keep the application process as uncomplicated as possible so good intentions don't get strangled in bureaucratic red tape;
- Get funding early—late arriving supplements to the budget create problems;
- Provide real, necessary, minimum wage jobs and good supervision;
- Establish a good management team, utilize local service delivery area agencies and recruit at the local level;
- Medical benefits for participants receiving welfare assistance should not be affected by Youth Corps participation;
- The nepotism clause might be modified in smaller communities;
- Data to be collected on the application should be clear, i.e., identification of high school dropouts or other special groups;
- Participants needing remedial attention should receive appropriate assistance;
- Consistent post-program follow-up is important for documentation of results;
- Follow-up survey of Youth Corps employers would also benefit results documentation;
- Job readiness training and attention to attitude (must be on time, responsible, cooperative, dependable, positive) are keys to teaching the work ethic and for building a better tomorrow for young people;
- Private sector involvement in the program helps prepare participants for future jobs;
- Program could benefit from time frame expansion beyond Michigan's current four months;
- Look to Michigan for information on problems, approaches and successes.

Conclusion

In reporting on the Michigan Youth Corps study conducted by his firm, Louis Harris said, "At a time when so many associate dropping out, suicide and lack of motivation and direction with young people in America, it is striking and significant to learn that it is possible to turn young people on, to motivate them with a deep sense of obligation to want to work, to want to learn, to want to perform with excellence."

As observed by Louis Harris, Michigan has a summer jobs program that teaches young people "a work ethic, a sense of self-respect and a dedication to self improvement—all preludes for them to enter the job market successfully." This success is made possible because of strong support from the governor and the director of the Department of Labor, broad bipartisan legislative support, a good management team and coordination on state and local levels.

The strengths of the program are its simple eligibility requirements and application process and the bringing together of young people from all economic, social and ethnic backgrounds in work experiences that provide long-term value to the citizens of Michigan and to the state.

MYC workers constructing an exhibition site at the Gladwin County Fairground.

According to Sen. Joe Conroy, the Michigan Youth Corps allows people to see their tax dollars at work. In an area of high unemployment, young people are getting jobs, being given a chance to build a better future and are fulfilling important service needs.

By providing job skills and experience the Michigan Youth Corps is building bridges of opportunity for the future of thousands of young people.

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For further information on the Michigan Youth Corps, contact Kathy Madden, deputy director, Michigan Youth Corps, P.O. Box 30015, Lansing, Michigan 48909.

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CSG INNOVATIONS TRANSFER PROJECT

The Council of State Governments fosters sharing of state experience through its programs to transfer innovative ideas. Disseminating information to state officials and others about successful policies and programs in other states is a major goal of the Council's Innovations Transfer Project. The project takes its cue from former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, who said that a state serves as a laboratory for trying "novel social and economic experiments without risk to the rest of the country." Implied in the statement is the concept that good policies and programs can be adopted by other states for the benefit of their citizens.

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